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Reprinted from the BIBLICAL WORLD, Vol. XXXIII, No. 5, May, 1909

THE FREER PSALTER

HENRY A. SANDERS

PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
Freer Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

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Exploration and Discovery

THE FREER PSALTER

A brief report of Mr. Freer's manuscript of the Psalms in Greek based on the examination of two or three pages only, has appeared in this journal (Vol. XXXI, p. 140) and in the *American Journal of Archaeology* (Vol. XII, pp. 50 ff.), where a facsimile of a few lines of the main portion of the manuscript appears. Since that time I have succeeded in separating 50 leaves from the beginning of the manuscript and 29 from the end. There still remains a hardened mass in the center containing some 35 leaves, which I hope to separate soon.

Regarding the age and history of the manuscript some further information has been gathered from the leaves separated. The main portion can hardly be dated before the beginning of the fifth century. Though more than one hand appears in the manuscript none can be identified with that of any other manuscript in the Freer collection. With regard to the history of the manuscript it is important to note that the last seven leaves are in an entirely different hand from the rest (see facsimile). These were not an addition written expressly to complete the manuscript, after it had suffered loss through age and wear, but formed part of a manuscript already old when its last leaves were taken to complete the older and more valuable codex. This is proved by the different size and shape of page, by differences in text, and especially by the repetition of vss. 5 to 8 of Ps. 142 at the beginning of the added fragment, though they occur on the last page of the original manuscript.

Two important inferences may be drawn from these conditions: first, at the time of this addition to the manuscript Greek was not written in the monastery owning it; otherwise so ill-matched an ending would not have been employed; second, the addition was made long after the time of writing of the later manuscript, the date of which does not have to be reckoned from the decay of Greek influence in Egypt, as it may well have been written outside of Egypt.

Further examination of the style of writing of this fragment tends to associate it with the early examples of the Slavonic uncial rather than with the imitative, ornamental hands of the ninth century. The nearest parallel that I have been able to find is Θ^a (facsimile in Tischendorf's, *Mon. Sacra Inedita*, Pl. I) a four-leaf Biblical fragment brought by Tischendorf from Sinai and presumably written there or near there. The accents in

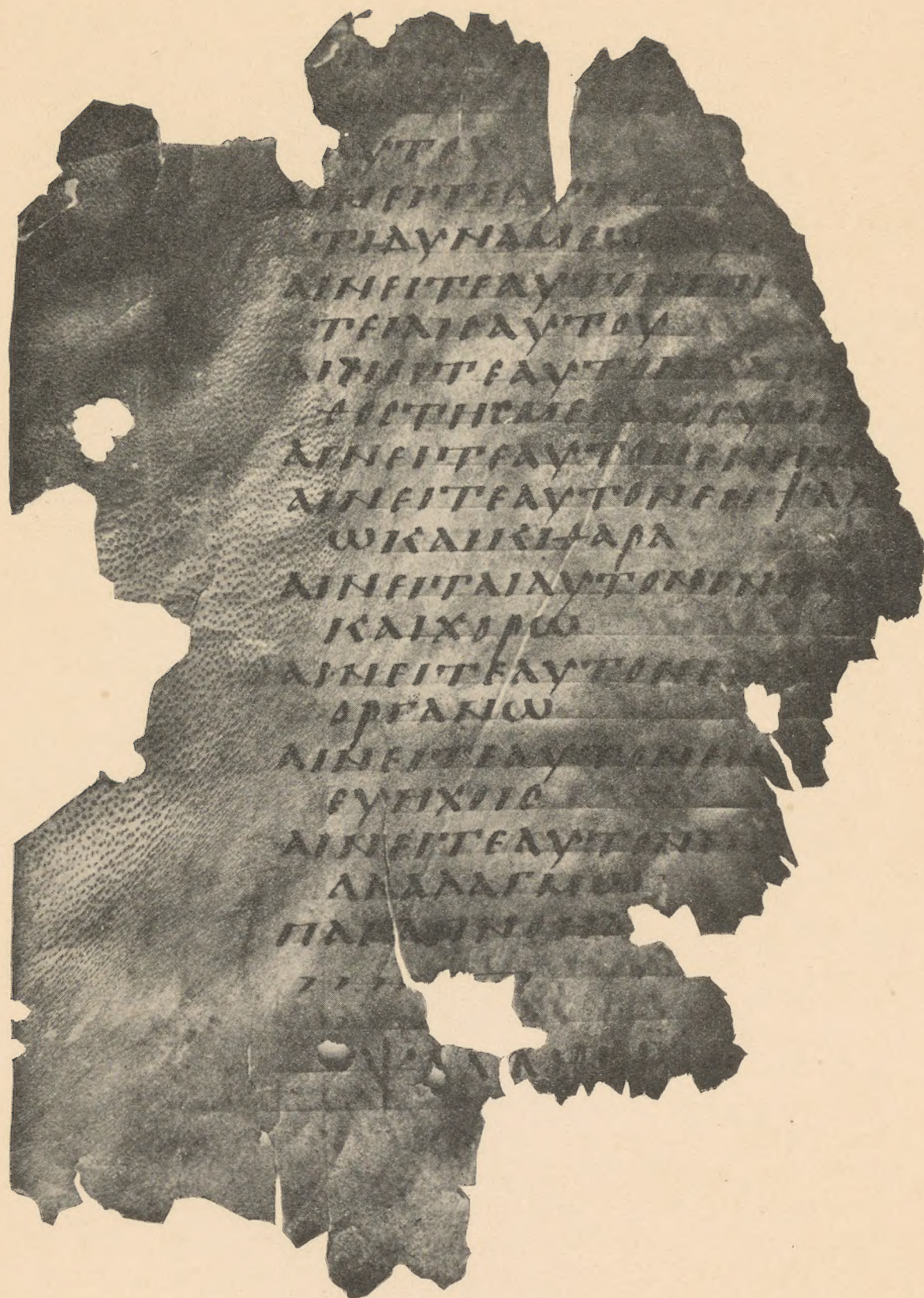
Θ^a are from a later hand. Regarding the other slight differences, the punctuation and enlarged ϕ are no more a mark of later date for Θ^a than the longer cross through the θ or the slightly heavier strokes are a like indication for the Psalms fragment. The similarity of the two hands in most respects shows that they belong to the same century and are probably otherwise related.

A somewhat similar hand, though cursive, is found in Pap. XXXVII of the British Museum (facs. in *Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts of the British Museum*; Greek, Pl. XII and *Palaeographical Society*, I, 38), a psalter of the late sixth or early seventh century. It may be considered the forerunner of the style of our Psalms fragment and similar specimens which are tentatively dated in the seventh or early eighth century.

The last binding of the Psalms manuscript cannot therefore have been much earlier than the ninth century and may well have occurred in the tenth or eleventh. The old home of all these manuscripts in the Freer collection must be sought in some monastery which lived on well beyond this period.

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THE FREER PSALTER

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